

THE PRESIDENT & THE CRISIS,

OR

AN APPEAL TO THE CANDID

OF THE

DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

From the Hartford Daily Courant, Saturday, Oct. 8th, 1864.

Since the government was organized and went into operation with George Washington as chief magistrate, no man has filled that high and responsible position, who has been more severely tried; and who has had greater burdens to bear, than the present incumbent. No man can refer to, and read over his carefully worded inaugural address, without feeling that he took the office with the best possible intentions toward every section of the country; and with a just and deliberate determination, if the South remained loyal, to give the people of that section the least possible grounds for just complaint. But the moment had come for which the leaders of the South had fired the Southern heart; they could not let the opportunity pass; it might never come again; and they madly plunged into the vortex of war, with a determination to rule or ruin.

They, with many of their former political allies of the North, were confident that the people would never submit to war. That if the South began the war in earnest, and carried it on with vigor, even for a few months, a reaction would take place in favor of the old system of things—by which slavery was made to dominate in the national councils and to dic-

tate the national policy. They felt sure that by this reaction the democratic party would be restored to power; and that party once in power again, every demand of the South could be heeded with impunity, and the craven spirit of the mercenary trades-people of the North would tamely submit.

And let me say, and follow me while I prove it, that there has been great danger of this. Mr. Lincoln could not carry on the war against the South—to maintain the authority of the nation and do as his predecessors had done before him—make his administration a strictly party administration. To carry on the war and to make it successful, his administration must, as far as it was possible, be made a national administration. Consequently, he could not give the offices, either in the civil or the military department of the nation, to republicans exclusively. Had he done this, it would have made a party affair of the war, and the necessity would have been forced upon him to fight not only the democrats of the South, but also the democrats of the North.

This, it is true, he has to some extent been compelled to do, in spite of his most earnest and laudable efforts to avoid it; but not because his policy

was wrong, but because of the unavoidable dilemma in which circumstances placed him. The necessity of giving places of profit and trust to democrats involved him in precarious and trying difficulties. On the one hand, it has been the source of bitter complaint on the part of thoughtless and greedy men of his own party; and on the other, it compelled him, especially in the army, to put power in the hands of men who might be tempted to use it, not to crush the rebellion, but to delay the progress of the war with the view of creating discontent, producing a reaction; and thus restoring the democratic party, and consequently slavery, to power again. This, the future history of the war will show, is the very game the leaders of the democratic party and their standard-bearer have been playing. You will ask, how? Mark what I say then. When this war began, nearly all the prominent military men of the country were democrats—some of them infatuated and bigoted democrats. The leading party managers knew this, and this, more than aught else, made them bold against the incoming administration. Just before Mr. Lincoln was inaugurated, in the fall of 1860, a democratic meeting was held in Tweddle Hall, Albany. Mr. Seymour, now Governor of the State, was present. At this meeting the following position was substantially and distinctly taken: "If Mr. Lincoln is inaugurated and attempts to carry out his party policy—that is, does not abandon the pledges upon which he was elected by the people—the South will rebel; and if the South rebels, and he attempts to march soldiers south to subjugate our Southern brethren, we will barricade the streets of New York, and make the streets of that city run deep with fraternal blood." Mark you, this threat was made long before Fort Sumter was fired upon. When this event occurred in the spring of 1861, it changed the whole aspect of things. The democrats saw in the tornado that swept over the country, that resistance to Mr. Lincoln would be suicidal and dangerous. The people, by the insult to the flag, whatever the party leaders may have intended, were fused together; and they resolved to maintain the Union, and in maintaining the Union, to wipe out the insult that had been offered to the national ensign. It was the uprising of a free and noble people. The masses broke away from the control of their party leaders, and in a manner that will live immortally on the page of history, devoted themselves, as a people should in times of public peril, to the salvation of their country.

The leaders of the democratic party now—some cheerfully, others sullenly—gave in their adhesion to the war. But with the more unscrupulous ones, it

was a matter of policy and not of principle; and they began, immediately, to lay their plans for the new and unexpected condition of things. They watched eagerly for something to turn up in the management of the war, by which a division could again be made among the people. "Mr. Lincoln," said they, "cannot keep our friends from joining the army. The military men of the country are democrats, now if we can only put enough of our friends forward and obtain for them prominent positions in the army, we can whip the administration at its own game. We can in a cautious way nullify all war measures, and if the war can only be dragged along for a short season and made fruitless, the people will sicken of it, and the war will become unpopular. That object accomplished, a reaction will take place in the public mind and the democratic party, on the wave of this reaction, will again triumphantly ride into power."

The favorable opportunity to try this scheme came, when Gen. Buell was placed in command of our armies in the west, and Gen. McClellan took command of the Army of the Potomac. What was the result? *For more than a single year not a decisive movement was made.* This respite, or armistice, a thing the democrats are anxious to try again, gave the rebels a splendid opportunity to raise a large army and to fortify every important strategic point; an opportunity they were not slow to improve. What paralyzed McClellan's army? The mystery is easily explained. As soon as he came to Washington, the leaders of his party, Voorhees, Cox, Pendleton, Richardson, Vallandigham and others, gathered around him. They were his almost constant companions. They enjoyed his confidence and his friendship. Being a bigoted pro-slavery democrat, as his whole history proves, he was in sympathy with their views and feelings. How natural that he should lend them his ear. It was their coveted and golden opportunity, and they were not slow in taking advantage of it. McClellan is a young man. He was then only about thirty-six years of age. They made his head giddy with the prospect of the Presidency. They made him believe the President was afraid and was jealous of him. That he should not allow the President or the Secretary of War to urge him into any hazardous engagement. "Risk nothing," said they; "if you can retain your present hold of the country, you will be the next democratic candidate, and nothing can prevent you from being elected." "Besides," said they, "even if it should occasion delay, delay will save life. It will give the people time to consider and to see the cruelty of this wicked war. This will produce a reaction in the public mind, and put the democratic party—the on

ly party fit for it—in authority again.” Who can doubt that George B. McClellan, with his strong democratic proclivities, thought this the wisest and safest way for himself and the country? It was a shrewd device to paralyze our army and to aid the enemy.

The history of Gen. McClellan's campaign cannot be satisfactorily explained in any other way. In every instance, when a decisive moment came for action, he invariably clamored for reinforcements, and if the reinforcements were not at hand, as in the very nature of things they could not always be, the rump of politicians at Washington who were in the secret, impugned the motives of Secretary Stanton or of the President for not sending the reinforcements demanded, and edified the country with fulsome panegyrics on the heroic qualities of our “young Napoleon—our favorite leader.” They raised the cry of, “stop thief;” said the politicians were interfering with Gen. McClellan's plans. They charged Stanton and the President with jealousy; with mean, mercenary motives. This they did in public. Privately they no doubt chuckled over the fact, that the young leader was under their control, that they were the politicians who interfered with his plans, and who were preventing him from any successful movement.

It is a singular fact, and a fact which fully confirms this view of the case, that Gen. McClellan, though in command of a splendid army, large in numbers and fully equipped; though sent to put down a rebellion, to act on the *offensive*, adopted an extreme Fabian policy—was so extremely cautious and timid in his movements, that he may be said to have acted on the *defensive* rather than the *offensive*. Every action brought on while McClellan was in command, was brought on as much by the conduct and movements of the rebels, as by any movements of his army by his immediate orders. If we except the few comparatively light and unimportant engagements that followed the evacuation of Yorktown, McClellan made no attack during his whole campaign except at Antietam. During the seven days fight in front of Richmond, the engagements were brought on by the enemy; McClellan's army was acting on the *defensive*. At Antietam the programme was changed. Why? Because the insurrectionary army had left its own territory, had invaded a loyal State, and the commanding general was compelled to attack them or give up his commission. Think of a commanding general sent to put down an insurrection, acting for *fifteen months almost exclusively on the defensive!* The whole affair from beginning to end, is a ludicrous burlesque on war;

and the only reason why McClellan is not spurned by certain people who uphold him, is because they were either opposed to the war from the beginning, or because they are innocent and harmless civilians, who do not know what war against an insurrection means. Is it any wonder that men who cry “peace,” should support such a general?—that they should place that general on a platform demanding an armistice, who, while in command, virtually made an armistice—an armistice that was not broken only when the rebels saw a more favorable opportunity for a successful movement?

So far as the country was concerned, what was the result of this halting, higgling policy? Just what the democratic leaders expected and wanted. It cost much in blood and treasure; but they are not the men to balk at cost, when they are to gain anything by it. It produced a reaction in the public mind in favor of the democratic party. It elected two opposition governors—Parker of New Jersey, and Seymour of New York. If the spell of reaction had not been broken by the victories of Gen. Grant, it would have added to this list another Seymour in Connecticut, Woodward of Pennsylvania, and Valandigham of Ohio. Nothing in the world saved the country from this humiliation, but the unexpected and surprising victories of Gen. Grant. With four or five opposition governors to block the way, Mr. Lincoln's administration would have been hopelessly paralyzed, and the game would have been in the hands of the democratic leaders. Many sanguine democrats thought that Horatio Seymour of New York, could alone hold the administration in check. If he did not succeed it was not because he did not try. He made every effort he could, but was thwarted in the infamous scheme.

During the summer months just gone by, we have had another season of public depression. The people became restless, because General Grant has not yet taken Richmond. They forget that owing to former delays—the delays of which we have spoken—the rebels have had time to fortify every available place around Richmond; and that this rebel stronghold can now only be taken by cutting off the communications of the rebel army under Lee, which General Grant is successfully doing.

In consequence of these unavoidable delays the people lost faith, and six weeks ago, there was a strong current of popular feeling against the administration. The democratic leaders were sharp enough to see it. They became jubilant over it. It again promised success to their cherished scheme. Little Mac—the young and brave Napoleon—was trotted out with fresh enthusiasm. They resolved to make

him the standard bearer of the opposition. To this end they got up a mass meeting in New York city—the place of all others in the country to do it.—The “rotten boroughs” of the great metropolis were stirred up. The untterrified came out, and shouted themselves hoarse over little Mac. But ah, how sad the result!

The Chicago conclave met; made platform; nominated their candidate, and placed him upon it. The promise that he should be the candidate was redeemed. The prospect to the sanguine looked bright. But lo, and behold! The work is scarcely done, when the tidings come from the far distant South, that Farragut had played the deuce—Mobile is virtually at our mercy. What is worse still, on the heels of this, Atlanta falls. Finally, the rebels are routed hopelessly in the Shenandoah valley. How true it is that

“The best laid schemes of men and mice,
Gang aft a’glee.”

The confederates are in sadness, and Mr. Jefferson Davis will soon have to appoint a Fast day. Ought not Mr. Horatio Seymour, the President of the Chicago conclave, to call that convention together? Has not Mr. Wickliffe’s contingency arisen? And when they come together ought they not, considering all the circumstances and their influence upon coming events, to pass the following resolutions:

1. *Resolved*, That in consequence of the recent victories under Admiral Farragut and Gens. Sherman and Sheridan,* this convention do now go into

*There is additional reason for taking this advice, since the result of the elections in Maine, Vermont, Ohio, Indiana and Pennsylvania has become known.

The democratic party, once a noble, a virtuous, a loyal party, has by its sympathy for slavery allowed itself to be hopelessly beguiled; and stands to-day in the exact position of the Tories of the Revolution.

mourning; and that each member is hereby requested to wear crape on his arm, until Gen. Geo. B. McClellan has taken his departure on the first Tuesday in next November up Salt River.

2 *Resolved*, That this convention now adjourn *sine die*.

This is the just penalty which God seems to be meting out to these men for engaging in this unhallowed scheme; for putting themselves and their party in a position to make their success depend upon defeat to our armies and ruin to our country. God be praised for this deliverance! In being thankful to God, however, let us not forget the difficulties our chief magistrate has had to contend with in the course of this war. He has felt and seen these difficulties as keenly as any one in the country; and nothing but the greatest moderation and prudence on his part has saved us from utter ruin. He has saved us by maintaining a steady policy against the croakers of his party and against the factions opposition of his opponents. The discontent in the ranks of his own party, could not force him to make his administration anything but a national administration; he did not allow it to become a strictly Republican or party affair; nor did his factions opponents succeed in turning his attention away from slavery, the real cause of this war.

We shall get through our difficulties. Mr. Lincoln, as of right he ought to be, will be our President for four years more. I am confident the day is not far distant when, by the calm judgment of the American people, his administration will be looked upon in the light of all the difficulties that beset him, as equal to that of any man that has filled the executive chair. God be praised for having stood, and for now standing by us and by him who has been, and is to be, our leader—Abraham Lincoln.

TEUTONIA.